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## 'The Spike' and the Truth

Recently Arnaud de Borchgrave and Robert Moss published a best-selling novel entitled *The Spike*. Big Media treated it gingerly, and no wonder: de Borchgrave and Moss contend that some of what passes for news is not news but artfully planted Soviet propaganda generated in part at high levels of the U.S. government.

"Reviews have been few. Those that appeared generally have failed to grapple with *The Spike's* thrust, perhaps unintentionally. Even descriptions on best seller lists have been misleading. Wrote *The New York Times Book Review*: "Newsmen on the trail of a Soviet conspiracy." Said *The Washington Post's Book World*: "Spies and journalists mix and mingle in U.S. vs. USSR intelligence." Mix and mingle they do, but *The Spike* hardly ranks as an ordinary spy story. And consider: Had *The Spike* been wholly wrong, reviewers would have been quick to say so and trash it, rather than pussyfooting or ignoring it altogether.

Is *The Spike* fiction? Perhaps. Yet at least in Washington life has an eerie way of imitating art. Daniel Schorr, no fan of de Borchgrave and Moss, has written in the Leftist *New Republic*: "The villain of [*The Spike*]... is revealed as... a deputy director of the [National Security Council] and protege of the Vice President..."

Switching now to the real world:

(1) Retired Admiral Elmo Zumwalt has said David Aaron, a deputy assistant for national security affairs and Vice President Mondale's man on the National Security Council, engineered the disclosure of information about the Stealth aircraft technology to journalists. Stealth should make aircraft all but invisible to enemy radar. Defense Secretary Harold Brown apparently released information about Stealth to prove that President Carter really has not allowed the American arsenal to decline — that is, for political purposes. Some military men consider the leak a gross breach of security.

Jimmy Carter has refused to allow Aaron to give testimony in the congressional inquiry of the Stealth leak. In an apparent counterattack, Carter slammed a visible and effective Republican Congressman in Tennessee's Robin Beard, for revealing a defense secret — that the Soviets were cheating on SALT agreements by practicing the rapid re-loading of the silos housing their SS-18 missiles.

(2) The Central Intelligence Agency has encountered enormous difficulties in penetrating Soviet institutions. According to writer Edward Jay Epstein in *The New York Times Magazine*, the CIA entrapped a Soviet diplomat named Anatoly Filatov and set him to work for the United States in Moscow. Filatov was a classic mole — an agent working under deep cover for a nation opposed to his own. Accounts differ on how the Soviets caught on to Filatov, but catch on they did. His fate remains uncertain (he may be dead), and his loss was considered a major blow to American intelligence.

According to some accounts, Filatov's cover was blown in 1977 by Aaron during a careless conversation with a Rumanian diplomat. Aaron fiercely rejects that and other charges, and a CIA investigation has held him blameless. Yet Tennant Bagley, responsible in the mid-1960s for countering Soviet intelligence, told Epstein that "it takes a mole to catch a mole." According to Bagley, the two most successful CIA moles in Moscow were caught by the Soviets because they had been betrayed by moles working in American intelligence.

The Soviets have had great success in planting moles. One was Kim Philby, who became (a) a high-ranking member of British intelligence and (b) the British liaison with the CIA before exposure and escape to Moscow. Another was Richard Sorge. He masqueraded as a German newsman in Japan during the Second World War and told Stalin the day the Nazis would invade the Russian heartland; Stalin apparently did not believe him. Alger Hiss may have been still another.

These are major, known figures; lesser fry have been unmasked. What of those who continue to toil secretly? The very openness of Western societies works to the advantage of those who seek to destroy that openness. And rumors of Soviet moles near the top in Washington — notably near the top in the CIA — simply will not die.

We do not wish to imply that Aaron or anybody else connected with this murky business works for the Soviet Union. Yet plainly *something* odd has been going on. Perhaps congressional investigators should be asking questions along these lines: If Aaron did not burn Filatov, who did? Was it a mole, or was Filatov undone by a taste for high living? Do moles remain in place?

Aaron's defender, Daniel Schorr, points out that Aaron's case does parallel *The Spike* — a spy story that also traces certain lines of influence in government and the press. In addition to questions about the unfortunate Filatov, Americans would do well to seek answers to a larger question: How close does *The Spike* come to the truth?